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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 81/NO. 2 JANUARY 9, 2017

EXCERPT FROM NEW BOOK

Roots of today's world capitalist economic crisis

— PAGE 7

Trump support grows while Democrats face divisions, fights

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Since his election, Donald Trump has broadened his support based on appeals to the working class as he continues to assemble a Republican administration. The Democratic Party, on the other hand, is splintered, facing a fight for leadership and perspectives. As Trump prepares to take power, millions of workers are engaged in a broad discussion of how to go forward as the bosses and their government place the burden of the continuing capitalist crisis on their backs.

Trump's approval rating has risen to over 50 percent as he has agreed to union contracts at some of his hotels, publicly engaged in arm-twisting to force aerospace giants Lockheed and Boeing to slash their bills to the government for F-35 warplanes and a new Air Force One, and announced plans to dissolve his charitable foundation and put family holdings in trusts.

Trump backed down his supposed buddy Russian President Vladimir Putin, who said Dec. 22 he was thinking of building up Moscow's arsenal of nuclear weapons. "The United States must greatly strengthen and ex-

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Cuban solidarity has been 'extraordinary'

Namibian envoy speaks on Fidel Castro at UN

Thousands join tribute to Fidel Castro in Windhoek, Namibia, Dec. 8. Cuban internationalist volunteers fought and helped win independence of Namibia from apartheid South Africa. Banner says in part, "Revolution is a struggle to the death between the future and the past."

BY EMMA JOHNSON

"Friend or foe, one must acknowledge that Fidel Castro was an extraordinary person. For who but Fidel Castro could imagine taking on the Batista army with 13 armed men, only to go on to put in place the Cuban Revolution," said Linda Scott at a Dec. 20 special event at the United Nations General Assembly to commemorate Fidel Castro (see excerpts page 6). "From him we learned that one can compromise on anything except one's principles."

Scott, deputy permanent representative at Namibia's U.N. Mission, was one of nearly 30 speakers representing national governments and global

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UN Israel vote registers blow to Palestinian national fight

BY NAOMI CRAINE

In a departure from Washington's long-standing bipartisan policy, the Barack Obama administration decided not to block a resolution adopted by the United Nations Security Council Dec. 23 condemning the continual expansion of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land.

NEWS ANALYSIS

The resolution states in part that "the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution."

The vote in fact registers a blow to

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'Militant' files appeal against third seizure of paper at Attica

BY SETH GALINSKY

On Dec. 27 the *Militant* appealed a decision by officials at Attica Correctional Facility in New York to impound the Nov. 21 issue of the *Militant*, refusing to deliver it to subscriber Jalil Muntaqim. Muntaqim is a former Black Panther and founder of the Jericho Movement, which campaigns for amnesty for political prisoners.

This is the third time since mid-October that the prison's Media Review Committee has censored the *Militant* in violation of the Bill of Rights and the New York State Department of Correction's own rules and regulations.

Attica officials' "constantly shifting, unexplained and inexplicable grounds for censorship of the three issues," the *Militant*'s lawyer, David Goldstein, writes, "is arbitrary and capricious." Goldstein is from the prominent civil liberties law firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman.

The first issue of the *Militant* that prison officials impounded was the Oct. 3 issue, which featured an article

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Momentive strikers in NY: 'Solidarity keeps us strong!'

Daily Gazette/Marc Schultz

Strikers stay warm at Dec. 15 picket line at Momentive in Waterford, New York. Company has hired strikebreakers. Area workers donate food, kids' holiday gifts and firewood to strikers.

BY JACOB PERASSO

"They thought we'd break going into the holidays, but we've only gotten stronger every day," striker Kevin Alderman told a WRBG-TV reporter as workers maintained round-the-clock pickets at entrances to the sprawling Momentive Performance Materials chemical plant in Waterford, New York.

Some 700 members of International Union of Electrical Workers-Communications Workers of America Local 81359, who struck Nov. 2 after voting down several concession contract pro-

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Unrest across Venezuela reflects depth of capitalist crisis

BY SETH GALINSKY

In a sign of the depth of the capitalist economic crisis that is battering working people in Venezuela, looting broke out in at least nine cities across the country Dec. 16 and 17.

The spark was the Dec. 11 announcement by President Nicolás Maduro that he was withdrawing 100-bolivar notes, worth about US 3 cents on the black market, as of Dec. 15. The old notes had to be deposited in the bank or exchanged for new larger denominations.

Maduro also announced the tem-

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–On the picket line, p. 5–

Minn. Teamsters picket trucking company over union busting

Iceland fishing crews strike over wages, staffing levels

Suit by Sofia Vergara's embryos targets women's right to abortion

BY NAOMI CRAINE

The *New York Post* headline sounds like fodder for late night TV: "Sofia Vergara Sued By Her Own Embryos." But a "right-to-life" lawsuit filed against the television actress in Louisiana Dec. 7 has serious implications for women and the working class. It is part of a push by some opponents of women's right to choose abortion to establish a status of "personhood" for embryos as a tool to outlaw the procedure.

The lawsuit says it was filed on behalf of two embryos created by Vergara and her former fiancé Nick Loeb three years ago through in vitro fertilization. After they broke up in 2014, Vergara refused Loeb permission to have the embryos implanted in a surrogate; they remain frozen at a fertility clinic in California.

"Vergara has breached her duty to her offspring Emma and Isabella by preventing their birth," the suit states, without saying where the two names came from. Further, "she has caused and continues to cause them financial harm," because of an inheritance trust set up in Louisiana (it doesn't say when or by whom) "providing for their health, education, maintenance, and support." The embryos "are scheduled to be the sole beneficiaries of the Trust, at such time as they are born alive."

The document states that Vergara had told Loeb she "believed that life began at fertilization. Vergara knew that Loeb would not otherwise consent" to create the embryos. It demands the court name Loeb "sole curator of Emma and Isabella," with "full custody and authority to release them for transfer, continued development and birth."

The lawsuit is based on a special law unique to Louisiana, adopted in 1986, which states, "An in vitro fertilized human ovum exists as a juridical person." It explicitly gives embryos the right to sue or be sued, though New Orleans law professor Monica Hof Wallace told the Daily Beast she doesn't know of a single previous case citing the statute.

One of the two attorneys who filed the suit is Catherine Glenn Foster, a lawyer in Virginia whose work is devoted to opposing abortion and promoting other "pro-life" issues.

A growing number of states have adopted laws expanding the definition of "personhood" to include a fetus. Women in Indiana and Tennessee have been prosecuted for attempted murder or feticide under such laws for allegedly attempting self-induced abortions.

Some opponents of women's right to choose abortion are focusing on campaigning to pass state referenda granting "personhood" status to fertilized eggs — laying the ground for banning all abortions, and potentially some forms of birth control as well. These referenda have been rejected every time they've been on the ballot, including in Mississippi, North Dakota and Colorado.

Meanwhile, Ohio Gov. John Kasich vetoed a bill Dec. 13 that would have banned abortions after a fetal heartbeat was detected, as early as six weeks' gestation, noting that such laws have already been declared unconstitutional in North Dakota and Arkansas. Proponents of the measure hoped to use it to challenge the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court ruling decriminalizing abortion before "viability" — a vague criteria that changes with advancements in medical practice.

Kasich signed a separate law banning all abortions after 20 weeks' gestation, with the only exception being to save the life of a pregnant woman. More than a dozen states now have 20-week bans, earlier than any current definition of "viability," part of the decades-long campaign by opponents of women's rights to chip away at women's access to abortion.

Mosque in Redmond, Wash., attacked second time

Militant/Edwin Fruit

REDMOND, Wash. — For the second time in a month, a sign outside the Muslim Association of Puget Sound here was attacked Dec. 16. Holding up damaged sign are, from left, Aneelah Afzali, executive director of the American Muslim Empowerment Network of MAPS; Sulieman Abdulkeni, MAPS librarian; and Abduselam Ibrahim, MAPS operating manager.

The attack was captured by security cameras, showing someone taking an axe to the sign, splitting it in half and hacking holes in it.

The Socialist Workers Party visited the mosque Dec. 19, as party members did after the first attack Nov. 21, to show solidarity and pledge ongoing support.

"We call for the arrest, prosecution and jailing of all those responsible," Mary Martin, newly announced SWP candidate for mayor of Seattle, said in a statement released to the press across the state Dec. 24. "We urge all working people and those in the labor movement to speak out against these acts. We defend the right to worship for people of all religions."

Afzali thanked the SWP delegation for their solidarity. "Scapegoating Muslims only helps to divide working people," she said. "And we're glad you came to show support."

— EDWIN FRUIT

Abortion Is a Woman's Right!

by Pat Grogan, Evelyn Reed

Why abortion rights are central not only to the fight for the full emancipation of women, but to forging a united and fighting labor movement. **— $6**

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THE MILITANT

Bosses seek profits by shrinking packages

In grocery stores nationwide workers find they get less as profit-hungry bosses cut package sizes, what they call "shrinkflation," while prices remain the same. The 'Militant' presents the facts about the deepening economic crisis and how the government tries to hide the facts.

A few of the many reduced-size goods

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The Militant

Vol. 81/No. 2

Closing news date: December 28, 2016

Editor: John Studer
Managing Editor: Naomi Craine

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Emma Johnson, Jacob Perasso, Maggie Trowe, Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, one week in December.

Business manager: Lea Sherman

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018. **Telephone:** (212) 244-4899
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Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send $35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send $85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

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‘Women’s March’ aims to promote Democratic Party

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Every advance the working class makes is in the streets. Every blow to racism, every gain toward women’s emancipation, every strengthening of the unions has been won through the independent mobilization of working people and our allies in their millions.

The national rally scheduled for Jan. 21 under the name Women’s March on Washington points in the opposite direction. Its aim is to begin now to campaign to reinstall the Democratic Party in Congress and the White House.

COMMENTARY

That course — looking to the Democrats and electing “pro-choice” capitalist politicians — is what’s paved the road for more than four decades of erosion of the right to choose abortion, which is today at the cutting edge of attacks on the social and economic gains of women.

The Women’s March on Washington was called immediately after Republican Donald Trump won the presidential election and was set for the day after he takes office. The initial call for the rally said it would “demonstrate our disapproval of the new president and his values.”

Election day “was a lot of hope, then an incredible amount of sadness,” Mrinalini Chakraborty, a graduate student in Chicago and the Illinois state coordinator for the march, told the *Chicago Tribune*. The action was called amid hysteria about Trump in liberal and left circles, and widespread debate about how to “fix” the broken Democratic Party. Defending women’s right to choose abortion is not even mentioned, although a major annual anti-abortion rally will take place in Washington just six days later.

These misleaders who claim to speak for women’s rights have a long record of retreat and refusal to mobilize to defend women’s right to choose abortion in the streets. “Don’t rock the boat,” is their line. Work to “elect friends of women,” and they’ll protect us.

How Roe v. Wade put cap on gains

Ever since the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision to decriminalize abortion, the pro-Democratic Party leadership of the National Organization for Women and other feminist groups have sought to channel the fight out of the streets and into the ballot box. They were aided by the character and content of Roe v. Wade, which was based not on a woman’s right to “equal protection of the laws” guaranteed by the 14th Amendment, but on medical criteria and decisions made by pregnant women’s doctors, not by women themselves.

“Opponents of women’s rights have taken advantage of the Supreme Court’s ‘medical’ criteria from the outset,” Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes writes in *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People*. “And they’ve made the most of the fact that the 1973 court decision was handed down while a raging debate had not yet been fought out and won by those who insisted that a woman’s decision on this medical procedure falls under the protection of our hard-won constitutional rights.”

This was acknowledged by Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a longtime proponent of abortion rights and a member of the Supreme Court. She wrote in 1985 that Roe v. Wade “ventured too far in the change it ordered,” at a time when “abortion law was in a state of change across the nation.”

That trend was not the result of an epiphany by capitalist legislatures and courts. It was the result of a growing movement for women’s equality that was given impetus by the victories won in the streets in the 1950s and ’60s by millions in the working-class-led fight for Black rights. The demand for repeal of anti-abortion laws came to the fore

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Militant/Brian Williams

Mass defense of abortion clinics in Buffalo, New York, April 1992, set example of mobilization in streets that can advance women’s rights, instead of looking to Democratic Party.

Trump support grows while Democrats splinter

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pand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes,” Trump replied publicly. The next day Putin backed off.

U.S. “consumer confidence” hit its highest point in more than 15 years, even though long-term participation in the workforce is the lowest in modern history. “The gain in confidence was entirely due to rising expectations” following Trump’s election, Reuters said Dec. 27.

This puts wind in Trump’s sails as he looks to confirm his cabinet nominees and enact legislation after the inauguration Jan. 20.

He will face a fight. After the post-election hysteria around vote recounts and an Electoral-College-coup attempt flopped, heterogeneous elements in the Democratic Party are now planning to try and block his administration at every turn. In response, he’s looking to divide Democrats and draw some of them toward him.

For example, he intervened in the sharp debate on U.S. policy around the recent U.N. Security Council vote condemning Israeli settlements on the Palestinian West Bank and East Jerusalem. As the Barack Obama administration abstained, allowing passage of the vote Dec. 23, Trump denounced the move. “At the U.N., things will be different after Jan. 20th,” he tweeted.

New York Democratic Sen. Chuck Schumer, his party’s incoming Senate leader, also denounced the administration vote, called it “extremely frustrating, disappointing and confounding.” Democratic senators from West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Virginia, Maryland, Ohio, Oregon and Delaware also opposed Obama’s decision.

Foreign policy moves like this offer Trump opportunities to push forward.

With the Democratic Party in disarray after Hillary Clinton’s defeat, leaders of different currents within it, with their eyes on the 2018 Congressional elections, are scrambling to learn from the lessons of her loss and take over.

In an op-ed piece in the Dec. 26 *New York Times*, David Paul Kuhn disputed those who say Trump won because he galvanized support from racist white workers.

The fact that the civil rights movement overthrew Jim Crow segregation and changed social attitudes in the country forever was reflected in the election of Obama. “Barack Obama won more support among white men in 2008, including the working class, than any Democrat since 1980,” Kuhn said.

“By 2016, Mr. Trump personified the vote against the status quo, one still not working out for them,” he said.

“[M]uch of the white working class decided that Mr. Trump could be a jerk,” Kuhn said, pointing to concern over his demeaning views on women. “Absent any other champion, they supported the jerk they thought was more on their side.”

Sanders ‘revolution’

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who had the Democratic nomination stolen from him by the rigged Democratic super-delegate setup, is one of the leading contenders to seize the leadership in the party. Asked by talk-show host Conan O’Brien Nov. 29 if he would have beaten Trump, Sanders said, “I wish to God that I had had that opportunity.”

“The goal now is to mobilize millions of people around a progressive agenda,” Sanders said in a Democracy Now! interview released Dec. 26. “It would be a tragic mistake to believe that everybody who voted for Donald Trump is a ‘deplorable.’ They’re not,” Sanders said.

During her campaign, Clinton called workers who backed Trump “deplorables,” as well as “racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic.”

The soon-to-be commander-in-chief of U.S. imperialism will face the same intractable crisis of the capitalist system as his predecessors. On a world scale, capitalism is in a long contraction of production, trade and employment that no policies, including Trump’s plans for tax cuts, eased regulations and infrastructure spending, can change.

No solution to capitalist crisis

“Nobody knows, nor can know, how this financial crisis will unfold,” Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes wrote in 2008, as the “Great Recession” unfolded. “But it’s not the result of ‘mistaken policies.’ It is a product of the workings of the laws of capitalism itself. It’s a consequence, not a cause, of finance capital’s development.” Barnes’ article is included in *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People*.

Since the 2008-09 crash, “there is a growing openness among working people to talk and debate with each other about the broadest social and political questions facing our class, our unions, and our allies,” writes SWP leader Steve Clark in the book’s introduction. “Workers everywhere are looking for an explanation of capitalism’s grinding and destructive decline, and, even more importantly, how to chart a way forward to combat its consequences.”

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Capitalism’s World Crisis, Defending the Cuban Revolution and Building the Communist League. Speaker: Jonathan Silberman, Communist League. Fri., Jan. 6, 7 p.m. Donation: £2.50. *Room 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St., M1 2EH. Tel.: (016) 1478-2496.*

Unrest roils Venezuela

Continued from front page

porary closing of the border with Colombia and Brazil. He said the measures were necessary to undermine "mafias" that were speculating with the currency and had warehoused huge quantities of 100-bolivar notes outside the country.

But the new paper money didn't arrive — Maduro said planes with the new bills were delayed by unnamed "saboteurs" — and banks were overwhelmed with the crush of those trying to make deposits. Businesses stopped accepting 100-bolivar bills. Some towns ground to a halt as business owners and workers waited in line until midnight trying to deposit their bills, often without success.

The southeastern state of Bolivar, a mining region, was most affected, with more than 600 supermarkets and other stores looted. The government sent some 3,000 soldiers, national guardsmen and police to Ciudad Bolivar and other towns there Dec. 18. They imposed a curfew for two days, and arrested hundreds of people.

Many of the stores targeted in Bolivar were Chinese and Chinese-Venezuelan owned, fueled by anti-Chinese rhetoric on local radio. "They even took the light cables, the switches, the light bulbs," Maribel Figuera, a worker at the Great Spain Xiang Chen Supermarket, told the daily *Correo del Caroní*. Beijing, one of Caracas' main trading partners, called on the Venezuelan government to take "effective measures" to protect Chinese citizens there.

After the looting, Maduro extended the deadline for exchanging the bills to Jan. 2 and has reopened the border with Colombia. The government also promised loans and other aid for businesses that were affected and said it was sending packages of food and children's toys to Ciudad Bolivar.

Conditions for working people in Venezuela have been deteriorating for the last several years. The price of oil, which accounts for 95 percent of the country's export earnings, dropped by half since 2014, and oil production is now at a 13-year low. Inflation is estimated at anywhere from 500 percent to 830 percent annually.

Hospitals are short of basic supplies. Even with distribution of government food packets and free school meals, hunger is increasing with basic food items out of reach of many.

'Bolivarian revolution'

A slight upturn in oil prices to $55 a barrel in December is not enough to allow the government to fully maintain social programs begun after the election of Hugo Chávez as president in 1998. Those programs — an essential part of what Chávez and his United Socialist Party of Venezuela called the Bolivarian revolution and 21st century socialism — built thousands of houses and subsidized food and other basic necessities for working people. "Missions" set up by the government extended health care and education to the poorest urban areas and the countryside with the help of thousands of Cuban volunteers.

The Venezuelan government's close ties to revolutionary Cuba and its refusal to bow to Washington's dictates on trade and foreign policy drew the ire of U.S. imperialism. From George W. Bush to Barack Obama, every U.S. administration has sought ways to replace Chávez and then Maduro with a regime more amenable to U.S. capitalist interests. Washington has been silent on the latest crisis, however, worried about a social explosion that could further undermine U.S. capitalist interests.

The current crisis shows the limits of trying to administer capitalist market relations, not overthrowing them.

Capitalists take advantage of the measures to line their own pockets. Subsidized food and other goods are diverted from the stores, exacerbating shortages at the official prices, and sold at higher prices on the black market or in Colombia. Special exchange rates for dollars — designed to facilitate imports — has become a source of free money for business owners to speculate on.

On Dec. 20, Ford Motor Co. announced that it was halting auto production at its Valencia plant due to lower demand for the Fiestas and Explorer SUVs it manufactures. Some 2,000 auto workers will be laid off at least until April.

The Maduro government has sought to counter the combination of capitalist sabotage and the normal workings of the capitalist market with more administrative measures. On Dec. 9 William Contreras, Venezuela's superintendent of fair prices, ordered the confiscation and distribution of nearly 4 million toys from the Kreisel company, charging the company had underreported its inventory to get higher prices.

On Dec. 21 Contreras ordered clothing store EPK to lower its prices under government supervision.

The political opposition to Maduro centered in the Democratic Unity Roundtable — composed of pro-imperialist parties with close ties to Washington — is highly fractured and discredited among working people. They have a long record in defense of the capitalist class in Venezuela, including backing a failed coup against Chávez in 2002.

After the looting, the only demands raised by Henrique Capriles, governor of Miranda state and a prominent member of the pro-imperialist coalition, were an echo of what Maduro was already carrying out: Delay the withdrawal of the 100-bolivar notes and compensate businessmen whose stores were looted.

Cries of 'Free Oscar López!' fill Times Square

Militant/Maggie Trowe

NEW YORK — An energy-filled Christmas Day action at Times Square here demanded the U.S. government free Oscar López. The parranda — a traditional Puerto Rican Christmas celebration with music and lots of noise — was organized by 35 Women for Oscar. López has been jailed for more than 35 years on frame-up charges of "seditious conspiracy" for fighting for independence for the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico.

More than 80 participants sang traditional Christmas songs with lyrics changed to demand that President Barack Obama release López before his term ends Jan. 20. In San Juan, Puerto Rico, more than 100 people joined 35 Women for Oscar for a silent protest.

Just days before, two Spanish-language dailies, *El Diario* in New York and *La Opinión* in Los Angeles, published an interview with López. "I believe that independence is the only solution to the crisis that we have as a people," López said when asked if he had changed his views in prison. "We are colonized and don't have the power to resolve our own problems."

Free Oscar López contingents will take part in Three Kings Day parades in New York and Chicago Jan. 6, which is also López's 74th birthday.

On Jan. 11 East Coast supporters of his fight for freedom will be protesting in front of the White House in Washington. For more information visit: www.boricuahumanrights.org

— SARA LOBMAN

'Women's March' promotes Democratic Party

Continued from page 3

because the ability to control when and if to have children is fundamental to every aspect of a woman's life.

By cutting short the state-by-state mobilization in the streets needed to conquer abortion as a woman's right, Roe v. Wade in fact put a ceiling on these gains. Almost from day one access to the procedure came under attack, subject to growing restrictions that especially come down on working-class women and those living outside major cities.

The Jan. 21 march is even more an action to boost the Democratic Party and point to the ballot box as the road forward than the occasional one-off large rallies for women's rights called by NOW and other groups.

Then-Sen. Hillary Clinton underscored this message when she spoke at a 2004 March for Women's Lives, called to oppose the re-election of George W. Bush. "We didn't have to march for 12 long years because we had a government that respected the rights of women," she said, referring to the 1993-2001 presidency of Bill Clinton.

She didn't mention, of course, that abortion rights had suffered ongoing restrictions while women "didn't have to march" during the Clinton years. And she said nothing about the signature accomplishment of her husband's administration — eliminating Aid to Families with Dependent Children, with devastating effects for millions of working-class women. Like Roe v. Wade, it put a ceiling on key gains won by the working class in struggle, which have been further whittled away by the capitalist rulers over the last two decades.

Attacks on women *can* be countered

There's an important example of a different course that workers and young people looking to defend women's rights today can learn from.

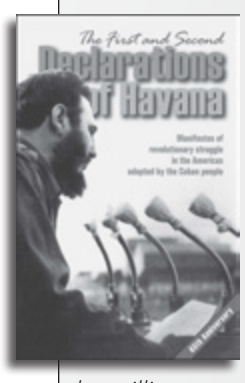
Emboldened by the bipartisan attacks on the right to choose abortion, Operation Rescue launched a national campaign in the early 1990s to physically shut down abortion clinics. They mobilized thousands of rightist cadres to lay siege to the three clinics in Wichita, Kansas, in the summer of 1991. Leaders of the main women's rights organization argued against a countermobilization, saying the cops and courts should be allowed to "do their job." The result was that the rightists succeeded in shutting the clinics for weeks.

Many defenders of women's rights drew the lessons from this defeat. In April 1992, when Operation Rescue tried to pull off a siege of clinics in Buffalo, New York, they were met by some 1,500 defenders who turned out daily at 5 a.m. to keep the clinics open. By the end of the second week, most of Operation Rescue's troops had left town, demoralized. Defenders of abortion rights went on to confront Operation Rescue in Houston and other cities and successfully beat them back.

This is the direction we need to look today — not the same dead-end of relying on the same capitalist parties who've overseen the assault on workers' rights and living standards for decades.

Supporters of the SWP will attend the Jan. 21 action, not to build it, but to meet and debate with those there an alternative, independent working-class road forward.

The First and Second Declarations of Havana



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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Maggie Trowe, Editor

Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles around the world!

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including strikers at Momentive, California port truckers fighting to be classified as workers, not owners, and United Auto Workers members locked out by Honeywell in Indiana. I invite those involved in workers' battles to contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

— Maggie Trowe

Minn. Teamsters picket trucking company over union busting

MAPLE GROVE, Minn. — Workers from Lakeville Motor Express and other members of Teamsters Local 120 hit the picket lines here against union busting after the Roseville trucking company unexpectedly shut down production Nov. 21. The company locked out 95 drivers and dockworkers, moved trailers and freight, and reopened at a different location with nonunion workers doing business as Finish Line Express.

Lakeville Motor Express "didn't close. The freight is still there, the trucks are still there. And the customers are still there. All they did was change the logo on the trucks," Local 120 business agent Virgil Christoffersen told the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. "Now they are saying they won't even pay employees for work they had already done or benefits that have been accrued."

"Bosses are trying to bust unions all over the U.S.," Jim Sperling, a former Lakeville driver, told the *Militant* on the picket line. He and other workers are owed two weeks' pay. "We're going to fight to the bitter end or it will be a domino effect."

Kevin Bartlett and Mike Johnson, both workers at ABF Freight, were two Local 120 members who have joined teams that follow Finish Line Express drivers and set up pickets as they make pick-ups and deliveries. "One boss came out and said he didn't have anything to do with this. I told him, 'Yes, you do,'" Johnson said. Bartlett has visited companies doing business with Finish Line and convinced several to drop contracts with the "new" company.

More than 100 Teamsters and other unionists protested Dec. 1 outside Finish Line Express. Lt. Gov. Tina Smith announced Dec. 6 that the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry "will make sure that Lakeville Motor Express follows the law, including paying the back wages and benefits they owe to former employees."

— Kevin Dwire

Iceland fishing crews strike over wages, staffing levels

At 8 p.m. Dec. 14 fishermen in Iceland hauled in their nets and headed to shore. Since then the country's entire fleet of trawlers has been idled by a strike of some 3,500 crew members.

In mid-November union officials signed a contract and called off a four-day strike. But members of all four unions involved voted overwhelmingly against the contract, and the strike resumed.

The conflict revolves around bosses' attempts to reduce manning levels on deck — an issue of safety as well as protecting jobs — as well as pricing the catch.

Fishermen get paid a share of the catch, so their incomes vary with ups and downs of the market. Unions estimate that wages have decreased by 30 percent since the recent strengthening of the krona, the national currency.

Bosses have started to lay off hundreds out of the 4,000 workers at fish processing plants across the country after running out of fish. Countering attempts to pit trawlermen and onshore workers against each other, Framsýn, the union that organizes both groups in the northeast, issued a statement backing fishermen's demands and calling on processers to keep workers employed.

Fishing is a major source of the wealth of Iceland's capitalist rulers. In 2001 the government ended the last fishermen's strike through decree after six weeks.

— Ögmundur Jónsson

Union Advocate/Michael Moore

More than 100 Teamsters and others protested Dec. 1 in Maple Grove, Minnesota, after Lakeville Motor Express bosses locked out 95 workers and reopened as Finish Line Express.

Momentive strikers: 'Solidarity keeps us strong'

Continued from front page

posals, continue to receive solidarity. Area unions are donating firewood.

"'Operation Keep Them Warm' is led by strikers' wives," Local 81359 President Dominick Patrignani told the *Militant*. Hundreds of gifts have been donated for Momentive families to pick up at the American Legion Post in Mechanicville, a town just north of the plant where many strikers live.

Six days before Christmas no more gifts were needed and the union is now requesting warm clothes for children instead. "We continue to receive plenty of food donations, including homemade soups and chilis," said Patrignani.

Four strikers spoke at a Christmas party meeting of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 236 in Albany Dec. 6. A motion to contribute $3,000 to the strikers' cause, amended to $5,000 from the floor, passed enthusiastically.

Strikers told the electricians they were getting support from a wide variety of area groups. Just before coming to their meeting, striker Michael Leonard said, they got a donation of food from the Capital District Coalition Against Islamophobia. "This was a bit of a surprise," he said. "We're getting culturally diverse — it's a growing, big circle of friends."

Strikers also got support from Faith on the Line, a group of Christian clergy that held a solidarity service outside the plant Dec. 22.

Momentive has hired strikebreakers and has refused to back down on demands to increase medical costs for working union members and retirees and cut 401(k) contributions.

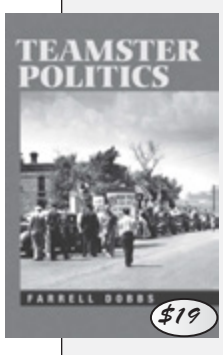
"The company has agreed to begin negotiations again in January," Patrignani told the *Militant*.

Donations may be sent to IUE-CWA Strike Defense Fund, P.O. Box 339, Waterford, NY 12188.

Ray Parsons from Delmar, New York, contributed to this article.

Recommended reading

Teamster Politics
— by Farrell Dobbs



How the men and women of Minneapolis Teamsters Local 574 and their class-struggle leadership used the power won through three hard-fought strikes in 1934 to extend union power throughout the Upper Midwest.

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25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

January 10, 1992

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Children of refugees are being detained here in increasing numbers, despite the fact that the law prohibits imprisonment of people under the age of 16.

New regulations were adopted in July 1990 on detaining refugees. According to Maj-Lis Lööv, the immigration minister in the previous Social Democratic government, the purpose of the new rules was to lessen the number of refugee children in prison. But the opposite has happened.

Before the new regulations, 181 refugee children were taken into custody in the first half of 1990. In the second half of that year 294 children were arrested and held, in the following 10 months, 587 children of asylum-seekers were locked up.

Up to December 1989, 80 percent of asylum-seekers were allowed to stay. The figure is now 40 percent.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

January 9, 1967

One week after *New York Times* correspondent Harrison Salisbury exploded the Washington lies about the nature of bombing attacks on north Vietnam, Lyndon Johnson still refuses to face up to the truth. At a news conference in LBJ's ranch in Johnson City, Texas, the president continued to insist that military targets alone are "authorized" for U.S. bombs.

However, Johnson admitted that civilians were getting killed as a result of U.S. attacks — and in the thousands:

"We do everything we can to minimize them, but they do occur in north Vietnam as they do in south Vietnam; there are thousands of civilians that have died this year in south Vietnam as the result of detonation of grenades and bombs, and every casualty is to be regretted." Washington intended to escalate the bombing attacks on Hanoi without saying one single word about it.

THE MILITANT
Official Weekly Organ of the Socialist Workers Party

January 10, 1942

The Communist Party is alarmed over passage by the House of Representatives of the Dies amendments which require the registration of all members of the Communist Party as agents of a "foreign principal" and places the Stalinists in the same category as members of the Nazi Bund. The C.P. claims that these amendments "represent the most serious success of friends and admirers of Nazi Germany."

No, this can't be palmed off as a Nazi plot. It's the action of sober legislators who are just as concerned about winning the war as the Stalinists. They aren't playing the Nazi game. They are playing their own game of fighting the labor movement by attacking the most vulnerable section of it, the Stalinists.

The way to defeat such legislation is by arousing the labor movement against all attacks on democratic rights and civil liberties.

‘Cuban soldiers gave their lives for our independence’

Below is an excerpt from the address by Linda Scott, speaking on behalf of the government of Namibia, at the special Dec. 20 U.N. event commemorating Fidel Castro.

Namibia gained independence from South Africa in 1990. In the 1988 battle of Cuito Cuanavale in southern Angola the apartheid army was defeated by the combined forces of Cuban internationalists, Namibian freedom fighters and Angolan soldiers. This defeat paved the way for the dismantling of South Africa’s white-supremacist regime, independence for Namibia, and Nelson Mandela’s release from prison.

Namibian President Hage Geingob, the country’s founding President Sam Nujoma, and other leaders spoke at a rally of thousands to honor Fidel Castro in the country’s capital Windhoek Dec. 6. Geingob also spoke at the mass rally for Castro in Havana Nov. 29.

[T]he solidarity forged in the trenches of the battlefields of southern Angola by Cuban internationalists is a solidarity for which Namibia shall always be indebted. We recognize that there is no Cuban family who has not been touched by the war for Namibia’s independence, who was not impacted by the sacrifice required and who did not lose at least one family member or friend.

Namibia suffered under the same apartheid horrors as our brothers and sisters across the border in South Africa. A daily reality imposed with the additional whip of colonialism. Many Namibians fled and took refuge in neighboring Angola. On May 4, 1978, an attack took place on a refugee camp in Cassinga in Angola, two days after the United Nations Security Council had discussed the situation there. This aggression resulted not only in the deaths of over 1,000 Namibians that day, but also of Cuban soldiers who were en route to assist the camp.

This incident resulted in an immediate response by only one country, the Republic of Cuba. And by only one world leader in the person of Fidel Castro. He ordered that the children who had survived would be brought to Cuba where schools would be set up for them. Other Namibian children later joined them. So it was that two schools were set up on the Island of Youth in Cuba for Namibian children to study.

This story is told and retold in our country. Many of these children have gone on to be leaders in Namibia, from doctors and geologists to economists and teachers.

We further remember the battle of Cuito Cuanavale, in which Cuban soldiers also gave their lives and which led to the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 435 and the successful elections and independence of which Namibia is so proud.

Friend or foe, one must acknowledge that Fidel Castro was an extraordinary person. For who but Fidel Castro could imagine taking on the Batista army with 13 armed men, only to go on to put in place the Cuban Revolution. Fidel was motivated by service to the oppressed and self-determination of the Americas and Africa.

From him we learned that one can compromise on anything except one’s principles. We know this because the Cuban soldiers returned to their home country without benefiting economically from the African countries in which they fought.

These were the principles we witnessed as Namibians, which gave us hope and resilience. The Cuban people continued to stand tall in the face of the Soviet withdrawal from their country and subsequent near starvation of the population due to the blockade of the country by the United States of America.

Having been among those who opened the Namibian Mission in Cuba at that time I can attest to the great difficulties that the people faced.

As we gather here in honor of this life well lived we stand as sovereign nations in gratitude to a man whose footprint on this planet remains in the lives of Namibian children who are born free.

“The solidarity forged in the trenches of the battlefield of southern Angola by Cuban internationalists is a solidarity for which Namibia shall always be indebted,” said Linda Scott, inset, Namibian deputy representative, at Dec. 20 tribute to Fidel Castro held in UN General Assembly hall. Above, joint Cuban-Namibian patrol in southern Angola.

Fidel Castro’s life celebrated at UN meeting

Continued from front page

and regional organizations of more than 100 countries, who paid tribute to Castro and the Cuban Revolution’s internationalism. Peter Thomson, ambassador of Fiji and president of the General Assembly, chaired the event, with the overwhelming majority of participants coming from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The meeting highlighted Washington’s failure to isolate Cuba in the world. Speaker after speaker pointed to Castro’s political leadership on a global scale and hailed the solidarity extended to their peoples over decades.

The number of representatives from Africa was particularly striking. Like Scott, they stressed the decisive importance of the 425,000 internationalist Cuban volunteers during their 16-year mission aiding the people of Angola and Namibia fighting apartheid South Africa. The volunteers were instrumental in consolidating Angola as a sovereign state, winning Namibia’s independence in 1990, Nelson Mandela’s release the same year and the subsequent dismantling of the apartheid state.

“It’s no coincidence that Nelson Mandela made his first foreign visit to Cuba,” said Ambassador Yemadaogo Eric Tiare from Burkina Faso, representing the African Group at the U.N.

Speakers pointed to Cuba’s achievements in health and education and many of them described Cuban medical missions in their own countries. They pointed out that Cuba extended this solidarity despite Washington’s political and economic war against the island and called for lifting the ongoing U.S. embargo.

“This would be the greatest homage we could pay to Fidel,” Tiare said.

Several speakers highlighted the Cuban government’s swift response when the Ebola epidemic hit West Africa in 2014. As soon as the request for aid came from the World Health Organization, the Cuban government issued an appeal for trained medical personnel. Within three days, more than 12,000 volunteered. Of these, 256 were selected and trained. When they arrived in Sierra Leone, one of the hardest hit countries, the mortality rate was 80 percent. The treatment they helped provide brought it down to less than 30 percent.

“The timely intervention of Cuba helped save the lives of many people,” Sierra Leone’s U.N. Ambassador Vandi Chidi Minah told participants.

“He raised the flag of the Non-Aligned Movement,” said Rafael Ramírez Carreño, Venezuela’s U.N. ambassador, one of many who spoke to Castro’s leadership of this movement, championing the call for cancellation of the mainly African, Asian and Latin American member countries’ debt to Washington and other imperialist exploiters.

Cuba was one of 25 founding members at the Non-Aligned Movement’s summit in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1961, two years after the victory of the revolution. In a blow to the U.S. rulers’ attempts to isolate Havana, the movement opposed Washington’s embargo, its military occupation of the Guantánamo Naval Base and affirmed Cuba’s right to determine its own future. Castro served as the movement’s chairman from 1979 to 1983 and again from 2006 to 2008.

Cuba, Africa & the World:
A Tribute to Fidel Castro

Speakers:

Dr. Piero Gleijeses, author of *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976*

Heather Benno, ANSWER coalition

Mary-Alice Waters, Socialist Workers Party

Jose Pertierra, Cuban-American lawyer

Jennifer Bryant, Venceremos Brigade

Nefta Freeman, International Committee for Peace, Justice & Dignity

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Washington, D.C.
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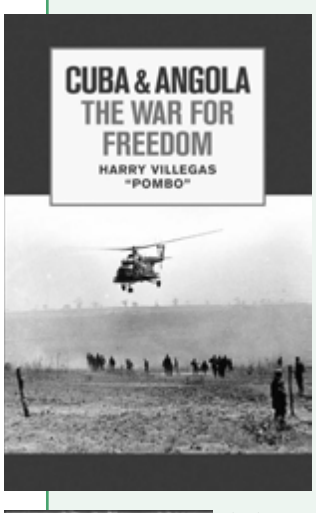
Further reading on Fidel Castro, the Cuban Revolution & the world



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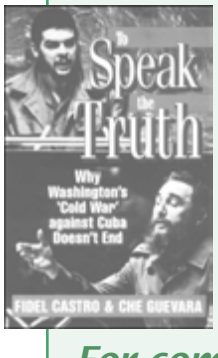

To Speak the Truth
Why Washington’s ‘Cold War’ Against Cuba Doesn’t End
Fidel Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara $18

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South Africa and Cuba in Today’s World
Fidel Castro, Nelson Mandela
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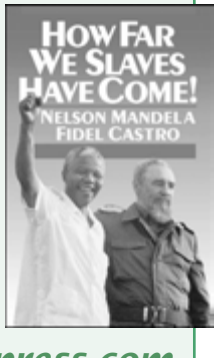

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Roots of today's world capitalist economic crisis

Below is an excerpt from The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People*, by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. It is from the chapter "Roots of the 2008 World Financial Crisis," written in May of that year. Copyright © 2016 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

Since the mid-1970s, when capitalism was hit with its first worldwide recession since World War II, the employing class has had diminishing room for substantial economic and social concessions to working people. [Bill] Clinton's job was to distance the Democratic Party from the "New Deal"–style social welfare programs many workers identified with that party. It had claimed credit for them ever since rising labor battles in the 1930s wrenched concessions from Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration during the Great Depression. From the New Deal through Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" in the mid-1960s, those programs had been the glue that held together the diverse Democratic Party coalition.

While draping itself in the Democrats' "progressive" mantle, the Clinton administration set out to change the party's complexion to such a degree that what had previously been its "moderate center" would become its broad majority and redefine what a liberal Democrat is. …

The Clinton administration also accelerated steps by the US rulers to try to counteract the declining rate of profit and the employers' "inadequate" returns on capital expenditures. The goal was to "encourage" the capitalists to expand industrial plant and equipment and employ growing numbers of workers in production. To that end, the administration and Congress adopted legislation that, along with other White House measures, helped the employing class erect the enormous edifice of household, real estate, corporate, and government debt, and its accompanying array of derivatives, that began to unravel with the first signs of a world financial crisis in 2007 and its acceleration early this year.

Nobody knows, nor can know, how this financial crisis will unfold. But it's not the result of "mistaken policies." It is a product of the workings of the laws of capitalism itself. It's a consequence, not a cause, of finance capital's development. The propertied US families have no choice but to engage in their debt-propelled course. …

Militant /Willie Cotton

"Not one penny, not one person for Washington's wars!" says Socialist Workers Party banner at March 2009 protest. By the end of 2008 U.S. imperialism spent some $900 billion on wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Jack Barnes said, soaring into the trillions since, as fighting drags on.

By the end of 2007, the outstanding value worldwide for such derivatives reached the previously unimaginable total of $596 trillion. In 2007 alone the single most "popular" variety of these massively leveraged bets actually doubled — so-called credit-default swaps, a form of supposed "insurance" against nonpayment of these same very risky deals. But as the direction of financial markets shifted at an accelerating pace in late 2007, the antidote became the poison.

Over the two decades since the 1987 stock market crash struck terror in the US rulers' hearts, they have maneuvered to avert a deep economic slump. As they've sought to hold down prices and interest rates, while at the same time spending billions on wars from Iraq to Yugoslavia to Afghanistan, their mounting debt has increasingly been bankrolled by governments and wealthy individuals around the world. Excluding Treasury bonds held by the Federal Reserve bank, more than half of these bonds — the US government's major credit instrument — are now, for the first time in history, held by these foreign entities.

The capitalists in China, who increasingly dominate the regime there, have been especially eager lenders to Washington and Wall Street. As of December 2007 they had bought up nearly $500 billion in US Treasury bonds — more than 20 percent of all such certificates outstanding worldwide, within a few months surpassing Japan as the number-one holder.

The Beijing regime's policy is to help keep the US dollar strong and maintain a competitive edge for Chinese manufactured goods in world markets. They are trading away improvements in the wages, social welfare, and living conditions of hundreds of millions of workers and peasants in China in order to boost export revenues that line the pockets of rising propertied layers and the privileged state and party bureaucracy in the new capitalist mandarinate. They've done so at the same time they are intensifying exploitation of toilers across Africa, Asia, and other parts of the world to accumulate capital in China.

By the end of 2008 US imperialism will have spent some $900 billion on its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the figures will head well into the trillions as the bloodletting continues. On top of that, the US rulers have waved the bloody shirt of 9/11 again and again in order to nearly double their overall war spending (they call it a "defense" budget) — from $308 billion in 2001 to nearly $600 billion in 2008. How are these wars being paid for? They're financed by debt.

In fact, for the first time in American history, the US ruling class is waging a major multifront, multiyear war without patriotic appeals for "sacrifice"—without drastically cutting back government domestic spending, imposing steep new taxes, or pressing "victory" bonds on working people and the middle classes. This time, at least for a while, the "victory" bonds are being bought by capitalists and other wealthy individuals and institutions in the United States, Japan, China, and many other places.

World capitalism's slow-burning depression

Average annual per capita GDP growth

SOURCE: WORLD BANK

In 2016 most working people would laugh in derision and disgust at a presidential claim about "the eight best years we've had in modern history." But that hasn't stopped Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton from saying preposterous things like the economy is "pretty darn great right now" (Obama, March 2016), or "our economy is so much stronger" since Obama was elected (Clinton at the July 2016 Democratic convention).

The facts tell a different story. Since 2006, US economic growth per person (that is, the yearly change in what the government calls Gross Domestic Product, or GDP) has fallen sharply from the nearly 4 percent averaged over the previous fifty years. The per capita growth rate since 2006 has averaged less than 0.5 percent — yes, less than half a percent per person per year. And US capitalism is doing better than most of its imperialist rivals in Europe and in the Pacific and Asia.

Moreover, real gross domestic investment in capacity expanding plant, equipment, and hiring has contracted since before the 2008-09 crisis, as has spending on roads, mass transportation, and other infrastructure by local, state, and federal governments.

— from *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record*

For the first time in decades, the US rulers have begun to fear the working class

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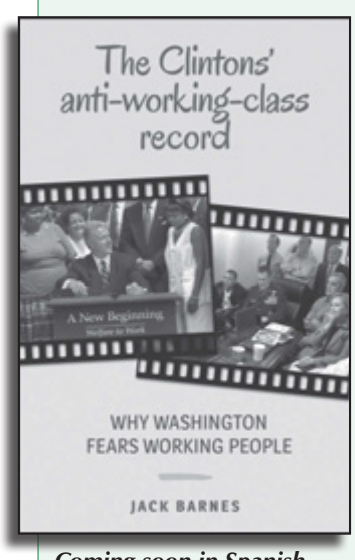

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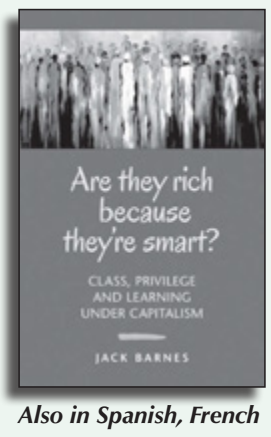

Also in Spanish, French

Also in Spanish

***Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* and *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* $7 each or $5 each with a subscription to the *Militant*.**

Cuban Revolution was 'guide to a lifetime of action'

Below is an excerpt from Cuba and the Coming American Revolution *— one of January's Books of the Month — by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. Barnes, who in 1961 was a student leader at Carleton College, describes the enormous impact that the victory of the Cuban Revolution had for revolutionists in the U.S. In the introduction Mary-Alice Waters, an active participant in many of the events Barnes describes and a leader of the SWP today, writes, "Cuba showed us that with class solidarity, political consciousness, courage, focused and persistent efforts at education, and a revolutionary leadership of a caliber like that in Cuba — a leadership tested and forged in battle over years, it is possible to stand up to enormous might and seemingly insurmountable odds* and win." *Copyright © 2001 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

Young literacy campaign volunteers rally in Havana in 1961, "The Year of Education" in revolutionary Cuba. "1961 was also our year of education," wrote Jack Barnes, recounting how young supporters of the revolution in the U.S. learned how to defend their right to organize.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JACK BARNES

The year 1961 in Cuba was "The Year of Education," when more than 100,000 young people, the big majority of them teenagers, left their homes and spread out across the country to eradicate illiteracy from Cuba before the year was up. In unexpected ways, 1961 was also our year of education.

One of our biggest lessons was what happens in an imperialist country when war begins.

In a matter of hours on April 17, the broad undecided center had shrunk to a voiceless kernel. Months of concentrated political action preparing for the inevitable battle fell into place in a few decisive days. Committed builders of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee at Carleton in early 1961 had been fewer than half a dozen. But now came the payoff for the weeks of education, propaganda work, writing, talking, pushing for and organizing open political debate, and taking up the challenges of every opponent on every issue. As the workers and peasants of Cuba inflicted a crushing defeat on U.S. imperialism, support for the political positions we had been defending exploded overnight. But only because we were there, we were known, and we were prepared to respond.

The sharp and violent polarization that erupted as the first shots were fired taught us another big lesson. As opponents of the U.S.-sponsored invasion, we were in the streets within hours. But so too were the ultra-right-wing cadres of the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) who mobilized to try to physically prevent Fair Play for Cuba Committee actions from taking place. …

We learned in practice what Batista and the Cuban Revolution had already taught us from afar: that in the United States, too, we would have to defeat the reactionary thugs in the streets even to have the right to make our positions known.

We got an education in liberalism, too, as most of our faculty friends went silent or absented themselves, rather than take on a dean (a reserved and tolerant one, no less) suddenly waving the Attorney General's list and FBI informer reports in their faces. A couple of prominent faculty conservatives, in fact, were more steadfast in their defense of our rights than were most of their liberal colleagues.

We saw student allies who had previously been staunch defenders of the Cuban Revolution, or at least of Fair Play's right to function like other campus organizations, suddenly develop cold feet; they were discovering that future career plans were incompatible with continued association with friends who were becoming communists.

Others made the opposite life decisions in a matter of days, sometimes hours.

Our understanding of these class questions was accelerated immeasurably by the fact we were sharing our day-by-day experiences, as well as talking about them into the wee hours of the morning with communist workers in the Twin Cities. They were people like V.R. Dunne, who had been a member of the Communist International from its founding in 1919, a leader of the Teamsters strikes and organizing drives in the Upper Midwest during the 1930s, and one of the first victims railroaded to prison by the federal government under the infamous Smith "Gag" Act for opposition to U.S. imperialism leading up to and during World War II.

These workers pointed us to the history of the class struggle in the United States, to the lessons we needed to learn from the workers and farmers in this country whose fighting legacy we inherited. They drew on this rich history to help us understand what we had to be prepared for as we went up against the most violent and brutal ruling class in the world.

Above all, they taught those of us who, like themselves, were so strongly and passionately attracted to the example being set by the fighting workers and peasants of Cuba that the challenge — *for us* — was not in Cuba. Our fight was in the United States. Cuba's workers and farmers had proven they could take care of themselves. Washington, to paraphrase Cuban Division General Enrique Carreras, would never be able to get that bone out of its throat.

Those workers like Dunne and others helped us see that the contest would end only with the defeat of the revolution in Cuba or a victorious socialist revolution in the United States.

"There is one thing we can most certainly tell Mr. Kennedy," Fidel Castro told a cheering crowd in Cuba on March 13 of that year. "A victorious revolution will be seen in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba."

That had become our conviction too. But above all it was becoming the guide to a lifetime of action, a course of conduct born of the historic needs, interests, and capacities of the working class. As beyond belief as this revolutionary goal appeared to the average American, it had become clear to us it was the only *realistic* perspective, and we set out to speed the day. …

We came to appreciate that everything depended on being organized and having done the political work beforehand. We learned firsthand how dangerously wrong and class-biased were the fears and semihysterical reactions of many of our campus-based colleagues. The source of reaction was not "backward American workers" but the U.S. ruling class, and the semihysterical middle-class layers who served as their transmission belt. The danger came also from those in these relatively better-off layers who, whether they owned up to it or not, had set out on a life course that of necessity involved politically rationalizing the rapacious and brutal actions of that ruling class.

January BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Impact of the 1959 Cuban Revolution on workers and youth in the U.S., setting the example that socialist revolution is possible.
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UN vote registers blow to Palestinian fight

Continued from front page

the decades-long struggle of the Palestinian people against national oppression. It reinforces the dead-end course of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas leaderships to rely on Washington and other imperialist powers to pressure Tel Aviv, while shackling the Palestinian masses as passive bystanders. It gives a boost to forces in Israel pushing for greater inroads into Palestinian territory.

Above, bus destroyed in Hamas bombing in Jerusalem, April 2016. Palestinian misleaders use terrorist attacks to pressure imperialists, instead of mobilizing workers and farmers. Inset, dots on map show Israeli settlements in West Bank, around Jerusalem.

It reflects the absence of any Palestinian leadership fighting for a way forward — a negotiated agreement that includes recognition of the state of Israel, coupled with recognition of a Palestinian state, as it exists today, as a stepping-stone to the fight for a single, contiguous homeland for the Palestinian people. Only this fight can provide the basis for advancing the interests of working people of all nationalities in the region today.

Educating and mobilizing Palestinian workers and farmers to campaign to reach such an agreement could break the cycle of past years of war, bloodshed and more settlements.

This would open the door to their renewed involvement as actors in history. As the *Militant* said in its April 25, 2014, editorial, "it would open space to fight the balkanization of Palestine, for jobs for the unemployed, for land and water rights and for Palestinians' freedom to travel, including the right to cross into Israel to work. It would provide stronger footing for economic and social development in Gaza and the West Bank. And it would create political space for the class struggle and the advancement of working-class solidarity in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza."

Emboldened by the Security Council vote and the continued lack of political mobilization in the West Bank, Israeli Education Minister Naftali Bennett said he would introduce legislation to annex a substantial part of the West Bank. Bennett's pro-settlement Jewish Home party is in the governing coalition headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party. Netanyahu has backed expanding many settlements, while giving lip service to support for negotiating a "two-state" agreement.

The vote in the Security Council was 14-0. For decades, the U.S. government, a permanent Security Council member, used its veto to block any resolution critical of its ally in Tel Aviv. Washington's abstention provoked sharp debate within the U.S. ruling class, including between the Obama administration in its final days and President-elect Donald Trump.

The resolution set off a flurry of diplomatic protests and recriminations by Netanyahu against members of the Security Council. He recalled Israel's ambassadors to New Zealand and Senegal, whose representatives sponsored the resolution, and canceled scheduled trips to Israel by the Senegalese foreign minister and Ukrainian prime minister.

Netanyahu accused Obama of staging a "shameless ambush" with the vote, and said he looks forward to working with Trump. The Obama administration has often been at odds with Tel Aviv, as it has shifted priorities in the Middle East, looking to an agreement with the Iranian government to slow down its nuclear program as a stepping stone to new alliances in the region in search of stability for U.S. imperialist interests. Obama refused to meet with the Israeli prime minister when he spoke to Congress against the Iran deal, and openly opposed his re-election in March 2015.

Dead-end course reinforced by UN

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas praised the resolution as offering "the legal basis to resolve" the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal called it a "step in the right direction." In the name of "internationalizing" the struggle, Abbas has increasingly looked to intervention by imperialist governments and institutions, such as the United Nations and European Union, to put pressure on Tel Aviv.

Now the Palestinian leaders say they will "use the resolution in international bodies," the *New York Times* reported Dec. 26. Neither has the perspective of turning to and mobilizing the Palestinian toilers to fight effectively for their social and political rights, much less mutual recognition, which is the only way to push back the seizure of more land by Israeli settlements.

Some 580,000 Israeli Jews now live in these areas beyond the 1967 border, in settlements scattered throughout the West Bank and in housing developments built up around eastern Jerusalem, ringing the city's Arab neighborhoods. These include 123 settlements authorized by Tel Aviv and about 100 unauthorized outposts, carving up Palestinian land right up to the border of Jordan.

Both the Palestinian Authority and the reactionary Islamist Hamas have organized and encouraged terrorist actions and provocations, including unconscionable attacks on civilians, handing Tel Aviv a pretext for murderous repression and leading to demoralization of Palestinian workers and farmers. The course of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas treats the Palestinian toilers as cannon fodder and undercuts the ability to win support among working people inside Israel — where growing social contradictions point toward coming class battles.

That's why fighting for an agreement that starts with recognition of Israel as well as a Palestinian state as it exists today is an essential immediate demand working people should back.

LETTERS

Limits of new museum

The National Museum of African American History and Culture has opened in Washington, DC. Many important images are on display, and the very fact of the museum represents a belated acknowledgment. But I found serious limitations.

For example the intertwining of Black and white workers is entirely absent, so is the leadership role of Black workers. Reconstruction gets short shrift, and Malcolm X's role is limited to one photo and a misleading caption. Books such as Pathfinder's *America's Revolutionary Heritage; Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power; Revolutionary Continuity;* and Malcolm X's speeches are necessary to supplement this museum's depiction of the history of African-Americans.

David Salner
Frederick, Maryland

Oil boss splurges

After sending a letter to oil workers at the Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery announcing a 50 percent increase in health insurance premiums and a freeze of pensions, both violations of the United Steelworkers contract, the thrifty PES CEO Phil Rinaldi was nevertheless able to plunk down $6,000 for a 3/4 pound fresh white truffle at auction.

Rinaldi announced plans to share the delicacy with "my many special friends." No word yet how many oil workers are among them.

Mitchel Rosenberg
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Attica censorship

Continued from front page

on the 1971 Attica prison rebellion. Attica officials claimed that issue had "offensive portions" that could "incite rebellion against government authority." The *Militant*'s story was a factual news article, like dozens of others that appeared in papers, magazines and TV stations all across the country, covering the anniversary as an event of historical importance.

One month later Attica impounded the Oct. 31 issue of the paper, claiming a short article on the *Militant*'s appeal of the previous censorship "could incite disobedience."

The latest notice of censorship claimed that the paper was banned solely because of what appears on "P. 6 top right." That refers to a reduced image of the front page of the Oct. 3 issue. The Inmate Disposition Notice impounding the issue claims that this image "could incite violence against prison staff." The notice makes no mention of the article on the fight against censorship at Attica, which the picture illustrates.

New York prison regulations say that its policy is "to encourage inmates to read publications from varied sources." The publications may not "incite disobedience" or advocate or present "a clear and immediate risk of lawlessness, violence, anarchy, or rebellion against Governmental authority." They include the *Militant* in a list of papers that are specifically to be allowed into the prison.

Attica authorities make no such case against the *Militant,* Goldstein notes. The reason is obvious, he says. "No reasonable, fair minded review" could conclude that any of the articles advocate violence against prison officials.

It's difficult to conclude that the pattern of impoundments amounts to "anything other than a blanket ban on any mention of Attica, of the Attica uprising, or of prisoners' constitutional rights, unless parroting a viewpoint approved by prison officials," Goldstein states.

Goldstein has not received any response from New York prison authorities to the *Militant*'s appeals.

A wide range of organizations and prominent individuals have issued statements calling on Attica to reverse its censorship of the *Militant*. They include the American Friends Service Committee; the Gathering for Justice and Justice League NYC; Mothers and Families, New Market, Alabama; National Lawyers Guild; New York Civil Liberties Union; Pen America; Yusef Salaam, one of the Central Park Five; *San Francisco Bay View* monthly; and Heather Ann Thompson, author of *Blood in the Water: The Attica Prison Uprising of 1971 and Its Legacy.*

Muntaqim, also known as Anthony Bottom, has faced many other restrictions on his constitutional rights from Attica officials. Last year books sent to him, including a volume of his own poems, were blocked. Prison officials have been interfering with his mail. And in December he was sentenced to four months in solitary confinement for historical comments he made about the Black Panther Party and gang violence during a class he teaches to fellow inmates on Black history.

"If Attica and New York state prison officials think they can tire us out by stalling and refusing to rescind their censorship of the *Militant*, they are mistaken," said *Militant* editor John Studer. "We will continue to fight for the freedom of the press and for the constitutional rights of all workers behind bars."

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